

**APRIL 1, 2011 TESTIMONY OF
THERESA DREW
DIRECTOR, CITY OF STAMFORD YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU
FOR THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
REGARDING**

**Supporting
HB 6638: AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE JUSTICE
And**

**RAISED HB 6634: AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD WELFARE AND DETENTION IN THE JUVENILE
JUSTICE SYSTEM AND ERASURE OF JUVENILE RECORDS**

Opposed to:

**RSB 1164: AN ACT DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS TO RAISE THE AGE OF
JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION FOR YOUTH SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE
And**

**RSB 1126: AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPACT ON MUNICIPALITIES OF THE INCREASED
AGE OF JUVENILE JURISDICTION**

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee: My name is Terri Drew, Director of the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) for the City of Stamford. The mission of the Mayor's YSB is to promote the development of caring, responsible, and successful young people. Through programs, we focus on developing leadership skills, self-confidence, and life skills in our young people. **The Stamford YSB is the lead agency for the DCF/CSSD Local Interagency Service Team (LIST) for the Stamford Juvenile Court District and for the Stamford Juvenile Review Board.**

The Stamford YSB supports Raised HB 6634, which addresses racial disparity, known as Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the state's juvenile justice system. When kids of color are over-represented and are treated more harshly because of race and ethnicity, DMC exists. We know that DMC exists in Connecticut's juvenile justice system because our Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee has conducted three intensive studies over the past two decades that control for factors like a child's prior juvenile system involvement and socioeconomic status.

This research originally found DMC in admissions to detention. When admission criteria changed and a court order was required for all admissions except those for Serious Juvenile Offenders, DMC disappeared – except for the admissions of Serious Juvenile Offenders. This bill would address this racial disparity by requiring a court order for all detention admissions, including for Serious Juvenile Offenders. This is important for two key reasons: 1. for a justice system to be credible it must be seen as fair and providing the same treatment to everyone; 2. putting kids in detention solely because of the color of their skin is expensive. Taxpayers pay upfront for the time in detention, and down the line since admission to detention is a strong predictor of how far a child will “progress” through the system.

We support House Bill 6638 which includes technical and other changes to statute needed for the effective, on-time implementation of “Raise the Age” for 17-year-olds on July 1, 2012.

We strongly oppose RSB 1164 and RSB 1226, which call for the delay of raising the age to include 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system on July 1, 2012. The legislation to Raise the Age in Connecticut was originally passed in 2007. Connecticut should implement Raise the Age on time for 17-year-olds because:

- Broad, bipartisan research shows that kids tried in the juvenile system show lower recidivism rates than those tried in the adult system.
- Serving 17 year olds through timely, age appropriate, community services and supports, including Family Support Centers and diversion programs like JRBs, is better for families and less costly than residential options.
- We successfully implemented "Raise the Age" for 16 year olds in 2010.
- Due to better than anticipated capacity, less than anticipated costs, and a shrinking juvenile justice system, there is much more room to absorb 17 year olds than originally anticipated.

On-time implementation of Raise the Age legislation on July 1, 2012 is good crime control policy, good public policy and good fiscal policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.